

# NAZISM *VERSUS* RELIGION

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## NAZISM versus RELIGION

NAZISM will seek to exterminate Christianity if Nazism dominates Europe. Too strong a statement? Not nearly as startling a statement as the fact that Poland fell in two weeks; Holland, Belgium, and France in less than two months. As nations perish, as liberty is throttled, as the Swastika sweeps on, we are gradually awakening from our smug complacency of yesterday. The old world is dead, a new world is being born. What of Christ and Christianity in the new?

### **Not a Holy War**

Before answering this question let us try and be objective. One can view the World War of 1940 as a battle between nations. One can think of it as an attempt to right the wrongs not only of the Treaty of Versailles, but of the centuries. One may allow the racial bitterness of the yesterdays to cloud the reality of the present. One may view the world chaos from these or other angles. Yet, as Christians, there is only one issue to face, one norm to judge by, namely, can Christianity and Nazism co-exist? The answer that this pamphlet will seek to establish is a categorical "No."

There will be no attempt to stamp this conflict as a Holy War. One group fights to obtain world domination—the other to retain it. The question we seek to solve is whether if Nazism triumphs can the Cross of Christ survive in Europe alongside the Swastika, which his late Holiness, Pope Pius XI, stigmatized as "the cross that is not the Cross of Christ"?

Before getting down to strict proof a few remarks are in order. First, this pamphlet does not concern itself with the Nazi-Jewish controversy. With vicious words and more vicious deeds, Nazism boasts of its guilt in seeking to liquidate the Jewish people. Not only is it un-Christian to be anti-Semitic, but "racism" (or intolerance of any alien race) is definitely against the teaching of Christ. No one has spoken more powerfully on this point than Pope Pius XI.

Secondly, Nazism is waging a death struggle against both the Catholic and the Protestant or Evangelical Church. Most of what is contained herein will therefore be applicable to the two great Christian churches of the Third Reich.

Thirdly, and most important, one can approach our problem from many different angles. Any who have visited or lived in the Third Reich under Nazism need no pamphlet. They have witnessed the sordid story themselves. Let us ignore, however, the writings of victims of the Swastika, and let the Nazi leaders convict themselves out of their own mouths. Confession of guilt is stronger than circumstantial evidence.

Unmindful then of war hysteria, of racial antipathies, let us calmly and objectively present carefully documented proof that among other objectives Nazism seeks to exterminate Christianity.

### **Indictment**

This pamphlet will seek to establish three points.

First, that Christianity cannot function in a totalitarian State, especially under so ghastly efficient a State as the Third Reich.

Secondly, that Nazism is systematically seeking to liquidate Christianity in the Third Reich.



Third, that Nazism is in itself a false and pagan religion and therefore is, of its very essence, destructive of the Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish religions.

### The Challenge of Totalitarianism

"It is said that the body belongs to the State and the soul to the Church or to God. This is no longer the case. The whole man body and soul belongs to the German Nation and to the German State. The latter has also taken all matters of faith under its own control."<sup>1</sup>

The above quotation from the official organ of Alfred Rosenberg in one sense is superfluous. Once admit that the Third Reich is totalitarian (and every Nazi glories in this fact) and immediately there ensues a death struggle with Christianity.

Totalitarian is a high-sounding name for a simple concept. As the very word implies, it simply means that "*the total man*" belongs to the State.

At the risk of appearing to digress from Nazism, it will help to clarify the issue if a few basic notions of the two great conflicting philosophies of life are here recalled. The Christian philosophy of life, which forms an essential part of the American way of living, can briefly be set forth as follows: It believes in the sanctity of the individual as opposed to the mass man. It believes that the individual, consisting of body and soul, is dowered by Nature and ultimately by the Author of Nature, that is, by God, with certain natural rights, such as the right to liberty, the right to life, etc. These rights of the individual therefore come from God and not from the State. Individuals joining together form a natural institution known as the

<sup>1</sup> *National-Sozialistische Monatshefte*, September, 1938.

family, which has likewise from "the laws of nature and nature's God" certain definite rights and sanctities. Lastly, in both the logical and historical order, there is another natural institution known as civil society or the State, composed of the two prior natural elements, *viz.*, the family and the individual. It is the primary function of the State to protect and not to usurp the rights of the individual and the family; its secondary function is to promote the common welfare of its citizens by regulating the complexity of civilized life, and to engage in such activities as are beyond the scope and ability of either the individual or the family.

### **The American System**

This is the essence of the Christian philosophy of life. It is likewise the very basic doctrine on which the American system is founded. All of the distinctive features of the United States of America are only means to protect the above doctrine. A written Constitution, a government of checks and balances, the Supreme Court, etc., are only means to an end. Remember the United States of America did not create the doctrine of natural rights. God did. America simply incorporated this divine plan into a working government; a plan which is founded in the very nature of man and in the dignity of human personality.

Totalitarianism is a complete denial of the above. "The total man" belongs to the State. The composite individual of body and soul, the family man, the religious, the economic, the political man all belong to the State, and the State may modify and annul at will any and all of these rights. This is an essential doctrine of Nazism just as it is of Stalinism or of any other form of Totalitarianism.



### A Square Circle

If the total man, and therefore a man's soul, belongs to the State, then the Catholic, the Evangelical and the Jewish religions, claiming jurisdiction over the soul of their adherents, immediately clash with the Nazi regime. To attempt to be a loyal Nazi and also a practical Catholic is to attempt to square a circle.

Later on we shall study how Nazism is in itself a religion. Here we note only that once the State seeks to control the soul it likewise seeks to dethrone God, or rather it seeks to become god—a jealous god who will brook no other gods or forms of worship. Christianity then logically becomes for Nazism an alien, destructive force.

The following blasphemy from the pen of Herr Himmler, chief of the secret service, is typical of the Nazi mind.

“Which of us wandering through the lovely German countryside and coming unawares upon a Crucifix does not feel deep in his heart . . . a strange but enduring sense of shame? The Gods of our ancestors were different. They were men, and carried in their hands a weapon that typified the natural characteristic of our race, namely, readiness to act and self-reliance. How different is yon Pale Figure on the Cross, whose passivity and emphasized mien of suffering expresses only humility and self-abnegation, qualities which we conscious of our heroic blood, utterly deny. . . . The corruption of our blood caused by the intrusion of this alien philosophy must be ended.”<sup>2</sup>

It should be noted here that the various quotations which will be given from leading German officials are all uttered in a State in which freedom of the press,

<sup>2</sup> *Schwarze Korps*, organ of the S. S.

freedom of speech, etc., are completely nonexistent. Any statement made by the leaders of the Nazi regime can therefore be taken as expressing the official philosophy of life of the Third Reich.

One might go on quoting interminably but a pamphlet is necessarily limited in an exposition of doctrine. The above citations are probably sufficient, but one or two others might be added. For instance, von Schirach, who is the head of the Hitler Youth Movement, has the following to say:

"We are concerned with a totalitarian claim. I fail to see why there should be sectional, denominational fellowships beside the Hitler Youth. . . . We cannot abandon the principle that all youth belongs to us. We shall keep this goal inexorably before us and shall overthrow all opposition. For the rest I refrain from defining the programme of the Hitler Youth in any formula or series of propositions; it is summed up in the one person, Adolf Hitler."<sup>3</sup>

Dr. Ley, the leader of the Labor Front, states:

"The Party claims the totality of the soul of the German people. It cannot and will not suffer that another party or party-view dominate in Germany."<sup>4</sup>

"Upon admission to the Order (National Socialist Order of Leaders) the man belongs to the Party, body and soul. The Party gives him everything, if he in return gives all that he has to the Party."<sup>5</sup>

These are but a few of the many official statements of the Nazi leaders as to the essential conflict between the "total" control that they claim for the soul and the necessarily conflicting claim which was that of Christ, the founder of Christianity. In art, in

<sup>3</sup> *Junge Kirche*, 1935, pp. 56 f.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Ley as quoted by Dr. Harry Fosdick in *Modern Christian German Martyrs*.

<sup>5</sup> *Nazi Primer*, quoted by Harwood Childs in Preface pg. XXVIII.

song, in education, the same propaganda is carried on. Typical of this is a caption to be found under an "icon" of the Fuehrer which reads:

"To Thee, O my Leader, belongs everything we possess  
Our goods, and our lives,  
Our hearts and our souls." <sup>6</sup>

This is Nazism unadorned and unabashed.

### **Damning Indictments**

Lest it appear that one, thousands of miles from the Third Reich, be misinformed or warped in his judgment by propaganda, it may be well at this time to set forth the blunt and damning indictments of those who have borne the brunt of the battle or who by their investigations have been in a position to adjudge.

### **The Pope Speaks**

"If the tree of peace which We planted with pure intention in German soil has not borne the fruit We desired in the interests of your people, no one in the wide world who has eyes to see and ears to hear can say today that the fault lies with the Church and her Head. The lessons of the past years make it clear where the responsibility lies. They disclose machinations that from the beginning had no other aim than *a war of extermination.*" <sup>7</sup>

### **The German Bishops Speak**

"These efforts aim at completely extirpating Christianity, and at introducing a new faith which has

<sup>6</sup> *Schwarze Korps.*

<sup>7</sup> *The Persecution of the Church in Germany*, Pope Pius XI, pp. 4 seq.



nothing to do with true faith and the Christian belief in another world.”<sup>8</sup>

### **The Protestant Army Chaplains Speak**

“The new breach which divides the German nation is the breach between National Socialism and Christianity. . . . The State and the Party combat today not only the Churches. They combat Christianity. This fact is repeatedly denied. It is true, nevertheless. . . . In the training camps of the Party it is repeatedly explained that National Socialism has three enemies: Judaism, Masonry and Christianity. Public acceptance of Christianity is regarded, when a new position is to be filled, as a tie that unfits the candidate for service to the State or the Party. . . . The official recognition of Ludendorff’s propaganda and the granting of the first national prize to Alfred Rosenberg have done away with all doubt. Everyone in Germany now knows how things stand. Therefore the breach. The means by which this combat is carried on is the ruthless use of State power. . . . The State itself is an object of the new ideology that combats the Christian faith. The racial ethic, represented through the Party and the Police, armed with all the force of the totalitarian State, hurls itself against materially helpless Christianity. The situation has become wholly intolerable through the fashion in which these State forces are employed. . . . Worse than this ruthless use of material and military force is the spiritual violence suffered under State and military discipline. In Halle, a high functionary of the Storm Troops, speaking before assembled members of the organization, referred to Christ as ‘that swine.’ School teachers have re-

<sup>8</sup> “National Socialism a Religion,” *The Catholic World*, November, 1938, pp. 168 seq.

peatedly referred to Jesus in their classrooms as 'that Jewish tramp.' Young teachers have sought out their pastors for aid because they were not permitted, in giving religious instruction, to refer to Christ in the Scriptural fashion. . . ." <sup>9</sup>

### **American Catholic Bishops Speak**

"Today the sense of all religious-minded men and women throughout the world is outraged by the Satanic resourcefulness of these leaders of modern paganism and by the incredible excesses committed by them in their attempt to exterminate religion and to blot out from the minds of the German people all true knowledge and love of God." <sup>10</sup>

### **Total War on the Soul**

No matter how strongly one may condemn Nazism, one must concede its efficiency; efficiency, not only in the field of battle, but efficiency in practically every sphere which it has touched. In fact, the most ghastly thing about Nazism is its stark efficiency. The regimentation of industry, which made possible the vast rearmament program of the Third Reich, the effectiveness of the military forces of the Swastika, are appalling facts only too well known to every man and woman of today whether in this country or abroad.

In every objective which Nazism sets out to accomplish there is found the same perfection of efficiency. As proven above, one of the objectives of the Nazi movement is to capture the soul as well as the body of every human being who falls under the jurisdiction of the Third Reich. To regiment men in industry, to

<sup>9</sup> Micklem, *National Socialism and the Roman Catholic Church*, pp. 201, 202.

<sup>10</sup> Washington, D. C., November, 1937.

train men into a vast military organization is one thing. To capture the soul of man is a very different thing. Men in other lands were skeptical about the efficiency of the German war machine—the shambles of ruined cities that stretch all the way from Narvik in Norway to the Riviera in France and from the Pyrenees on the Spanish border to the farthest confines of Poland attest to Nazi efficiency in the military field. We can no more be complacent with regard to the inability of the Nazi war machine to destroy the nations which it has obliterated so completely.

### **Apostate Strategy**

In one sense the Nazis have not proceeded as Nero of old who sought to destroy Christianity by exterminating the Christian. To have slain the Catholics and Evangelicals of Germany would have been to destroy man power. Another technique was followed, a technique which sadly enough, was borrowed from the very Christian churches themselves. It is the technique worked out by apostates such as Goebbels. Space will not permit the full story of the attempt of Nazism to destroy the Christian religion within its confines and within the vassal states it seeks to dominate. The full story of this is told with thoroughly documented detail in perhaps the best book which has been published in this field, *viz.*, *National Socialism and the Roman Catholic Church* by Nathaniel Micklem.<sup>11</sup> Every statement made therein—and the record is a damning one—is carefully supported by the exact citation from the statements or writings of the leaders of the Nazi Third Reich.

This part of the pamphlet will only stress three points. First, if one wishes to capture the soul of a

<sup>11</sup> Oxford Press, 1939.



nation, one must first capture its youth. Secondly, one must destroy all possibility of the older generation sabotaging the re-education of youth, and thirdly, the Church must be prevented from carrying on a counter-attack by its priests and its ministers, either through the extermination of the priesthood or ministry, or by the suppression of all the agencies by which the ministers or priests can function. This in brief is the method that has been employed, the details must be left to the industry of the reader of this pamphlet if he desires to peruse the books set forth in the bibliography appended to this work.

### **The Struggle for Youth**

Today in all the dictatorship, the great struggle is the struggle for youth. Older people can be cowed and older people are on their way out. The world which tyrants are seeking to construct must be builded by young men and young women. Goebbels it was who learned from the Catholic Church that if one captures the child one captures the man. Consequently, the great emphasis in the Third Reich has been to indoctrinate the souls of youth.

The suppression, gradually at first, more vigorously pursued as the years went on, of the denominational schools both Catholic and Evangelical, is a story that can be read in detail in Micklem. The methods have varied. Sometimes complete and ruthless shutting-down of the schools; other times, as in some of the stronger centers, by gradually suppressing the schools by a very simple method. Parents who sent their children to a Catholic or a Protestant school found that they could not obtain work. The children themselves were ostracized by the Hitler Youth Movement, called by the name which is the most damning and

irksome to German youngsters, namely, a "Jew." Gradually, parents withdrew their children from the denomination schools. As soon as the building became, to use the words of the Nazis, "an economic loss," then the school was re-opened under Nazi teachers.

### **"Better That a Mill Stone"**

Americans must not be under the delusion that sending a child to a Nazi State school is the same as sending a child to a public school in the United States. The Nazi school is definitely not a neutral school, but a school to indoctrinate the child with the Nazi philosophy of life which is termed the "Weltanschauung."<sup>12</sup> How viciously corrupting this philosophy of life is and how destructive of Christianity it is bound to be in regard to the adolescent mind, can best be illustrated by the instructions issued to the teachers of the Hitler Youth Movement in Austria. This document was published in the *Osservatore Romano* of June 19, 1938, and its authenticity can be vouched for by the writer from his own personal knowledge. Some fifty theses or doctrines to be inculcated are set forth. Space will permit only but a few be cited. The teachers were instructed to draw a contrast bringing out the following:<sup>13</sup>

"How did Planetta (the murderer of Dollfuss) die? Shouting, 'Heil, Hitler. Long live Germany.' How did Christ die? He died *whimpering on the Cross.*"

At face value the statement is blasphemous but if one were to seek to analyze just what effect it would

<sup>12</sup> This term, normally applied to any world view or philosophy of life, has been adopted by Nazism as distinctive of the Nazi world view or philosophy of life and will be so used in this pamphlet.

<sup>13</sup> Translated and reprinted in Micklem, pp. 227-229.

have on a German child, its pernicious results are only too evident. The great virtue that is drilled into German youth is the virtue of courage. The "Strength through Joy" movement is typically Germanic. Valor has been and still is one of the great glories of the German race. Cowardice has always been despised and is despised today. Even their most bitter enemies admit the valor of the German soldier. Teach the adolescent child that a murderer of one who opposed the Nazis was a hero because he shouted, "long live Germany," and then ask the same child not only to admire but to adore Jesus Christ Who died "whimpering on the Cross," and one can easily see just how much of reverence for Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the World, would remain in the soul of that German child. Those who have witnessed the transformation of the soul of the child in Austria since doctrines such as this have begun to be preached realize only too well the diabolical insidiousness of a doctrine such as this. The quotation already cited from Himmler about the "Pale Figure on the Cross, etc.," is but an adult expression of the same idea.

Let us continue with other theses ordered by the Nazis to be taught in Austria, theses which scarcely need any comment. "Christianity is a religion for slaves and idiots, for it teaches 'the last shall be first and the first last . . .'" Again, the doctrine of the racial supremacy of the Nordic people which is one of the essential dogmas of the Nazi religion, which we shall soon discuss, is brought into play. "A Universal, Messianic idea could only be found in an inferior people; a pure race has no need of a Redeemer."

In mind with the same thought is a thesis, "According to Christianity negroes and Germans are equal." Those who have read anything of the tremendous im-



portance placed on a pure racial stream of Nazism will realize only too well what effect this would have on the child. To make equal the despised Negroes (and Negroes are tremendously despised in the Third Reich) and the dominant world race, the German race, to teach that Jesus Christ died for all men whether they be black or white or Nordic is something that is bound to have a powerful reaction upon the youthful mind. In line with the same thought, the arrogance of this superior race asserts itself: "Evil passes, good abides. The Catholic Church will come to an end."

There is, of course, a whole series of attacks on Christianity as being of Jewish origin. For those of us in a country like the United States of America where tolerance of Jew, Protestant, and Catholic is one of our most prized possessions, we can little understand the anti-Semitic attitude of Central Europe. For those, however, who have been educated in the Third Reich, there is no name, no epithet, no condemnation which reacts more strongly upon the growing mind than to accuse one of being "a Jew." In light of the above, then, here are just a few of the theses covering this point. "Christianity is a substitute Judaism made by Jews with its center in Rome." "Christ was a Jew." "Nero did right in his persecutions: he eradicated the Jewish spirit (Christianity)."

At this point two other theses might be introduced as of interest to those who are familiar with the organization to which the writer belongs: "Ignatius Loyola was of Hebrew origin." True, Ignatius founded the Jesuit Order but he was not of Jewish, but of Spanish Basque origin. However, the second General of the Jesuit Order was a Castilian Jew, Laynez. In the midst of this distressing, depressing analysis of these theses given above, the succeeding doctrine may

cause a smile to those who know aught of the Jesuits. Number forty of the Theses states, "With the Jesuits all personality is suppressed." No comment.<sup>14</sup>

Unfortunately, the development of a number of the theses is not set forth, but one can well imagine, knowing something of the paganism of Nazism, what is taught the children under heading headings as these: "The Ten Commandments are the deposit of the lowest human instincts," "The Virgin Mary," "The Immaculate Conception," "If Germany no longer supports the Catholic Church it is finished. The new center of the world is Nürnberg, Rome is waning." The final thesis reads: "Predestination, the rites of the Church, the divine Trinity, original sin, etc.—what bosh!"

Remember these are not the aberrations of just some anti-Christian fanatic in the Nazi movement. These are the official theses which were issued to all the teachers in Austria in order to de-Christianize that Christian nation after the Anschluss. The reader is asked to judge the effect of these teachings, not from the mature mind of the one reading them, but from the mind of a child, deprived of all balancing factors—normal home life and the counsel of ministers and priests.

### The Cold Pogrom

German genius streamlined military warfare. Nazi cunning has as efficiently simplified the attempted destruction of Christianity.

The youth of the Third Reich have been spiritually poisoned as outlined above. To cow the older generation is an easy matter for a tyranny as ruthless as Nazism. Economic pressure and propaganda are tak-

<sup>14</sup> Micklem, p. 229.

ing their toll. The "cold pogrom" is more efficient than the tactics of Nero and Diocletian. The Nazi leaders take no chance that there might be truth in the saying "the blood of martyrs is the seed of Christians." The concentration camp is more destructive than the butchery of the Roman Coliseum.

The third step completes the throttling process. Seminary after seminary has been liquidated. Convents are closed. Nuns work in factories and the fields to keep alive. No priests of "alien blood" will be permitted to enter the Reich, nor may those of Nordic blood leave for foreign seminaries. Soon none will be educated within the Third Reich. A generation, and ministers and priests will be no more. The Sacraments and the Mass will become but a memory.

Simple—brutally simple and diabolical!

### **Guilty As Charged**

Having discussed the essential conflict between Christianity and totalitarianism, having sketched the persecution of the Church, we now come to the final point, *viz.*, the new religion that the Nazis would substitute for Christianity. The best summary of the dogmas of the new religion as well as one of the most blunt and scathing exposés of Nazism comes from the pen of Pope Pius XI. Let us then reprint the indictment. Next will follow the confessions of the accused. Let the reader pronounce the verdict.

### **The Indictment**

"He is not a believer in God who uses the word of God rhetorically, but he who associates with the sacred word the true and worthy idea of God.

"He who, in pantheistic vagueness, equates God



with the universe, and identifies God with the world and the world with God, does not belong to believers in God.

"He who replaces a personal God with a weird impersonal Fate supposedly according to ancient pre-Christian German concepts, denies the wisdom and providence of God that 'reacheth from end to end mightily and ordereth all things sweetly' and directs everything for the best. Such a one cannot claim to be numbered among those who believe in God.

"He who takes the race, or the people, or the State, or the form of Government, the bearers of the power of the State or other fundamental elements of human society—which in the temporal order of things have an essential and honourable place—out of the system of their earthly valuation, and makes them the ultimate norm of all, even of religious values, and deifies them with an idolatrous worship, perverts and falsifies the order of things created and commanded by God. Such a one is far from true belief in God and a conception of life corresponding to true belief.

"Beware, Venerable Brethren, of the growing abuse in speech and writing, of using the thrice holy name of God as a meaningless label for a more or less capricious form of human search and longing. Work among your faithful that they may be vigilant to reject this aberration as it deserves. Our God is the Personal, superhuman, almighty, infinitely perfect God, one in the Trinity of Persons, threefold in the unity of the Divine essence, the Creator of the Universe, the Lord and King in whom the history of the world finds fulfilment, who will not, and cannot, tolerate a rival god by His side."<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *The Persecution of the Church in Germany*, Pius XI, pp. 7-9.

### The Confession of Guilt

The quotations which follow might be multiplied a hundredfold. Bear in mind that they are not the rantings of fanatics so prevalent in a democracy like ours. In the Third Reich "total war" has been made on freedom of the press. Free speech is absolutely nonexistent.

Secondly, the press is not only State controlled but State inspired. The State in the Third Reich is one man—the Fuehrer.

Thirdly, these quotations are for the most part from the leaders of Nazism, men to whom the molding of the minds of youth, of labor, of the populace has been officially entrusted. They constitute the "Evangelists" of the Creed of Nazism.

"We of the German religion today turn to this ancient Nordic, Indo-German Light-Hero figure and get rid of a false and diseased Christ picture, created by the Christian Pope and Church to the hurt of humanity." <sup>16</sup>

Becker, Party official and Director of the Workers' Front, stated in a speech that in centuries to come a man with a right judgment of present events would come to say: "Christ was great, but Adolf Hitler was greater." <sup>17</sup>

"The symbol of our faith is the hooked cross (the swastika). It is our religion and symbol of life." <sup>18</sup>

"God has manifested himself not in Jesus Christ but in Adolf Hitler." <sup>19</sup>

"The teaching of Adolf Hitler—therein is to be found the Gospel of the German people." <sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Foreword to the *Twenty-five Theses of the German Religion*, by Prof. Ernst Bergmann.

<sup>17</sup> Becker, *Frankfurter Zeitung*, October 10, 1935.

<sup>18</sup> *National-Sozialistische Monatshefte*.

<sup>19</sup> Dr. Engelke; reported in the *Manchester Guardian*, July 15, 1938.

<sup>20</sup> Dr. Ley; reported in the *Times*, November 1, 1937.

"The Gods of our ancestors . . . were real men, girt with weapons, symbolising that which was most typical in the inborn attitude of our people—the love of action born of self-reliant responsibility. What a contrast to that pallid man on the cross, whose passive bearing and accentuated mien of suffering express humility and the extreme of self-renunciation—qualities in entire contradiction to the fundamental heroic attitude which is native to our blood!" <sup>21</sup>

"How high Horst Wessel (Nazi 'martyr') towers over that Jesus of Nazareth! That Jesus who pleaded that the bitter cup should be taken from him. How unattainably high all Horst Wessels stand above Jesus." <sup>22</sup>

"Adolf Hitler is the redeemer and leader of the German people, we shall believe in him even when all seems lost, we shall hope in him when otherwise we might despair. We thank the Almighty that He has given us a leader like Adolf Hitler. Hitler's name is our faith. This faith has made us carry our flag as the symbol of immortality. O leader, take our lives, take us body and soul." <sup>23</sup>

"Adolf Hitler's books and speeches are our Sermon on the Mount." <sup>24</sup>

"Can there be anything lofty about a religion whose God came into this world only for suffering and who died on the cross the ignominious death of a criminal?" <sup>25</sup>

For the initiation ceremony of the Hitler Youth the applicant for admission subscribes among other

<sup>21</sup> *Schwarze Korps*, organ of the S. S., July, 1939.

<sup>22</sup> *Der Brunner*, January 2, 1934.

<sup>23</sup> No. 27 of *Durchbruch*; quoted in *The Catholic World*, November, 1938, p. 167.

<sup>24</sup> Adolf Wagner, Lord of Bavaria, at a mass meeting in Munich; quoted in *Catholic Church Nazi Scapegoat No. Two*, edited by The Forum.

<sup>25</sup> Hans Weidler, *Why No More Christianity*, an official Party publication.



doctrines to the following dogma: "1. The Leader is always right. 2. Never violate discipline. 3. The program is your dogma; it demands your complete surrender to the cause. 4. Whatever serves the interest of the movement, and through it Germany and the German people, is right." <sup>26</sup>

"We are united with God through our Leader, Adolf Hitler." <sup>27</sup>

"I believe on this earth in Adolf Hitler alone. I believe in one Lord God who made me and guides me, and I believe that this Lord God has sent Adolf Hitler to us." <sup>28</sup>

"The Fuehrer is always right . . ." <sup>29</sup>

"We are armed and prepared to continue the battle against Catholicism until the final frightful decision, until the point of total annihilation." <sup>30</sup>

"German blood and Christian baptismal water are completely irreconcilable. . . . Contrary to Christianity, race is to the ordinary man the most holy thing. There can be no compromise here, but a decisive break. But this time the break must be at the expense of Christianity, not at the expense of our race." <sup>31</sup>

"The Will of God is given to us in our Blood." <sup>32</sup>

"The primacy of the State over the Church must be recognized and the primary assumptions of the State (as expressed in the doctrine of Race, Blood, and Soil), on which its work is based, must be regarded as sacrosanct." <sup>33</sup>

<sup>26</sup> *Nazi Primer*, quoted by Harwood Childs in Preface pp. XXIII seq.

<sup>27</sup> Von Schirach, quoted in *The Religious Crisis in Germany*, Dorothy Buxton.

<sup>28</sup> Dr. Ley; quoted in *Manchester Guardian*, July 15, 1938.

<sup>29</sup> *National Socialist Year Book*, 1938.

<sup>30</sup> *Volkischer Beobachter*, October, 1939.

<sup>31</sup> *Rassenschandung* (Racial Disgrace).

<sup>32</sup> Kerrl, Head of Ministry for Church Affairs; cited in *The Religious Crisis in Germany*, Dorothy Buxton; London.

<sup>33</sup> Kerrl; *ibid.*

"Our belief is the Fuehrer's world-philosophy, and while we hold that belief, we can have no other: no man can serve two masters. . . . Clearly we can submit only to ourselves and have no need to take up the Cross. . . . Only in the community of our nation can we save our souls." <sup>34</sup>

"We have no interest in setting up a new religion, our religion is our National Socialist outlook, and our Testament is the book *Mein Kampf*, of our Leader Adolf Hitler." <sup>35</sup>

### Apparent Conflicts

A bewildering series of contradictions and obscurities will be noted by anyone reading much of the writings of Nazi leaders on the question of religion.

It may serve to clarify the picture if one bears in mind that the Fuehrer is not particularly interested in detail. The objective is "to exterminate" Christianity. All attacks, even though contradictory, which aid that objective are tolerated. Some Nazis follow the stark pagan school of the Ludendorffs. Some as we have seen stigmatize Christ as "a Jew" and therefore in conflict with the "Religion of Race." Others, as Rosenberg and his followers, would salvage Christ, the man, by attempting to prove He was no Jew but a Nordic and that it was St. Paul who judaized Christianity. Some would revert to the old gods and rites of pre-Christian Germany. Others would eliminate all ritual.

These apparent conflicts mean little. All have one common objective—to exterminate the Christian Churches. Time and the whim of the Fuehrer will

<sup>34</sup> Dr. Mutschmann, District Leader of Leipzig, Micklem, p. 190.

<sup>35</sup> Hildebrandt, District Leader; Doberaner Nachrichten, June 16, 1936, Micklem, p. 140.

dictate the details of the "Era of Nazism" which will supplant the "Christian Era."

### **The Mind of the Fuehrer**

"Whenever an old religion dies a new religion comes into being." This old adage should perhaps today be modified to read, that when an old religion is uprooted a new religion is indoctrinated.

Essentially is this true of Nazism. The struggle today is not between the philosophy of the State and the doctrines of religion as in the Kulturkampf. The issue is between Weltanschauung, or the Nazi religion, and all other forms of religion. Again, the struggle is not between conflicting religions as, for example, Protestantism and Catholicism, each free to preach, write, and debate their claims. The issue is between Christianity and a tyrannical totalitarian group who on the one hand have destroyed all freedom of speech, press, education, organization, and every known means to throttle their opponents, and who on the other hand through a servile press, radio, school system, and every form of education and indoctrination seek to inculcate their new religion.

To present briefly and clearly the dogmas and moral beliefs of the new religion is not an easy task in a pamphlet. In one sense it is an impossible task at this time, for they are still in the formation process.

Nazism is a one-man ideology and yet the author of *Mein Kampf* has never publicly declared himself on the matter of his beliefs. The book scarcely refers to Christ. God is usually referred to as "Creator," "Providence," etc. The various public utterances of the Fuehrer fall within the indictment of Pius XI, "He is not a believer in God who uses the word of



God rhetorically, but he who associates with the sacred word the true and worthy idea of God."

Whether Chapter Four of Rauschning's new book is an accurate record of the Fuehrer's real mind is something not subject to direct proof for only the Fuehrer, Goebbels, Frau Goebbels, Forster, and the former Nazi chief were present. Indirectly, the proof is super-abundant. Deeds speak louder than words. Whether the leader of Nazism ever expressed these views is incidental. His hirelings have carried them into action and every major program in the Third Reich is the mind of the Fuehrer in action.

The entire chapter merits reading. A few quotes are here given:

(The Fuehrer): "The religions are all alike, no matter what they call themselves. They have no future—certainly none for the Germans. . . . For our people it is decisive whether they acknowledge the Jewish Christ-creed with its effeminate pity-ethics, or a strong, heroic belief in God in Nature, God in our own people, in our destiny, in our blood."

"One is either a German or a Christian. You cannot be both. You can throw the epileptic Paul out of Christianity—others have done so before us. You can make Christ into a noble human being, and deny his divinity and his role as a savior. People have been doing it for centuries. I believe there are such Christians today in England and America—Unitarians they call themselves, or something like that. It's no use, you cannot get rid of the mentality behind it. We don't want people who keep one eye on the life in the hereafter. We need free men who feel and know that God is in themselves."

"You can't make an Aryan of Jesus, that's nonsense. . . . Do you really believe the masses will ever

be Christian again? Nonsense! Never again. That tale is finished. No one will listen to it again. But we can hasten matters. The parsons will be made to dig their own graves."

"Without a religion of its own, the German people has no permanence. What this religion will be we do not yet know. We feel it, but that is not enough."

"They are no fools. The Church was something really big. Now we're its heirs. We, too, are a Church. Its day has gone. It will not fight. I'm quite satisfied. As long as youth follows me, I don't mind if the old people limp to the confessional. But the young ones—they will be different. I guarantee that." <sup>36</sup>

### Rosenberg's Myth

Outside of *Mein Kampf*, Herr Rosenberg's *Myth of the Twentieth Century* <sup>37</sup> is in one sense the most important treatise in the Third Reich. In another sense the book is unimportant for only the Fuehrer is "infallible." Rosenberg, however, is important. He controls the entire educational structure in the Third Reich. Every child and professor is subject to his teachings. The de-Christenizing of the mind of the Third Reich is chiefly in his hands.

Of his book which has been enshrined alongside of *Mein Kampf* it has been well written, "It is impossible to write with real respect. It is a monument of pseudo-scholarship, full of absurdities, misstatements, and bizarre theories." <sup>38</sup> There is no need here of a synopsis of this overemphasized book. It is the old story of racialism. The "eternal race-soul" is God.

<sup>36</sup> *Voice of Destruction*, Rauschnig, pp. 49 ff.

<sup>37</sup> No good translation of this book exists in English. The best summary is in Chapter II of Micklem.

<sup>38</sup> Micklem, pp. 15 seq.

Christ is not a Jew. Paul is responsible for the orientalizing and judaizing of the Christian religion. Sin is lack of harmony with "the spiritual racial stream of Germanism." Grace is rejected. Humility, mercy, asceticism are sneered at. Universal love is "a blow at the soul of Nordic Europe."

The following comment is too trenchant to be omitted. "It is not surprising that before the Revolution few men of education had endured to read the 'Mythus' and none to take it seriously. But we are precluded from understanding the present situation in Germany unless we realize that by the Party in power the ideas of the Mythus, the religion of Blood, Race, and Soil with Herr Hitler as its Muhammad, are taken with all seriousness and made the basis alike of education and of political action.

"On the significance of Herr Rosenberg's work the editor-in-chief of the *Westdeutscher Beobachter* wrote thus:

"'For the best and deepest men of to-day religion is no longer dogma, no longer denomination; the divine secret reveals itself to us in the notions of Blood, Race, and Soil which are from everlasting to everlasting. The man who disavows these values or seeks to impair their eternal working disavows life and therewith God who is the source of all life. Our religion would not be, if our Blood were not; that is the great mystic meaning of Rosenberg's work.'

"This is a typical utterance of the Nazi Press." <sup>39</sup>

### Positive Christianity

Many people both within and without the Third Reich were deluded for a while by the fact that in the original Twenty-five Points of Nazism (drawn up in

<sup>39</sup> Micklem, p. 22.



1922) it was stated, "The Party as such represents the point of view of a positive Christianity. . . ." <sup>40</sup>

Whether the expression "Positive Christianity" was to be used as bait or whether in the formative period Nazism hoped to work out a compromise with the Church is not clear. As time went on some explanation of an un-Christian Christianity had to be worked out. Rosenberg is the chief interpreter of the phrase: "Negative Christianity" is the judaicized Church; "Positive Christianity" is the racial Church stripped of all save "Blood, Race, Soil," and the infallible Fuehrer.

Much could be written on this vagary. Briefly the phrase "Positive Christianity" is an embezzled title. Nazism is neither "positive" or Christian. It is destructive and pagan.

### **"Political Catholicism"**

The stereotyped claim of the Nazis is that it has no quarrel with Catholicism but only with "Political Catholicism." From the Fuehrer down this has been the hue and cry justifying the attempt to exterminate the Church.

The issue can be briefly disposed of. "Political" in the Nazi sense does not mean as with us interference in elections, legislation, etc. "Political" means anything that affects the activities of a citizen of the Third Reich. The aim of the Church is to apply the Christian principles of justice, charity, mercy, and all the other moral virtues to individual, domestic, and social life. Christian morality must dominate the legislative, executive, and judicial activities of the State.

<sup>40</sup> See Buell, *New Governments in Europe*, p. 144.

Such a concept unalterably clashes with Nazism. "The total man"—body and soul is claimed by the Nazi. To dispute that claim is to oppose the State, and therefore in the Nazi concept to be guilty of "political" action. To such a charge the Church pleads guilty of carrying out Christ's claims. The conflict goes to the essence, it is capable of no compromise. From Nero to the Nazis this has been the challenge of Christianity. Martyrdom by "political tyrants" is not new in the Church.

### Summary of Nazi Dogmas

Weltanschauung or the philosophy of life of Nazism has certain well-defined dogmas which constitute it a religion of its own. From the synopsis of Pius XI and the quotations of the Party leaders set forth above, much of the doctrine is clear. On many points however there is still vagueness and confusion.

Let us summarize some of the chief dogmas. A God is recognized in name, but in fact He would appear to be a cosmic God, a being identified with the universe and not a personal God distinct from nature.

Race and blood are deified. The "chosen race" is the Nordic. All other races must be made vassals. Equality of man before God is denied.

The leaders of the Nordic race constitute the clergy of the new religion. As leaders of the race they constitute the State. A form of statolatry—idolatry of State—is set up. (Logically so, for as G. K. Chesterton says, "Once abolish God, and the Government becomes God."<sup>41</sup>) Infallibility belongs to the Leader.

Redemption is not redemption from sin but from inferiority. The Fuehrer is the divinely-sent Messias to liberate those of Nordic blood and to elevate them to

<sup>41</sup> *Christendom in Dublin*, G. K. Chesterton, p. 50.

the dominant race. Men are redeemed not by the Blood of Christ but by the purity of the racial blood stream.

Immortality does not belong to the individual soul but to the race. The stream of pure racial blood survives, the individual lives on in his offspring.

The Ten Commandments and the teachings of Christ in the moral order are reducible to one moral commandment, "Right is what serves the German People and the German Race."<sup>42</sup>

This briefly is a summary of the racial-religion which Nazism would substitute for Christianity.

### **Tomorrow?**

As Nazi neo-paganism and atheistic communism shackle new peoples, as the swastika and the hammer and sickle replace the cross, men and women who cherish religious liberty anxiously seek to pierce the veil of the future.

Realism is not pessimism. Christians cannot afford to be complacent about the challenge of Nazism. The nations of Europe who were complacent are now vassals of the Third Reich.

Of two things only are we certain. The Church of Christ will endure because Christ has promised to be with that Church even to the end of time. That promise must not be misunderstood. The Church began in the catacombs. The end of the world may find it again in the catacombs.

Secondly, Nazis will die, but Nazism may flourish. True it is that over the grave of every dictator, the clammy hand of death has chiseled, "Hic jacet alius

<sup>42</sup> Reich Jurist Leader, quoted in *The Religious Crisis in Germany*. Dorothy Buxton. Compare the code of Communism, "Whatever helps the proletarian revolution is ethical."



tyrannus" ("Here lies another tyrant") and over the grave of one, and only one, has been proclaimed, "He is not here, He is risen." Christ's death, however, did not mean the end of sin or of sinner. The death of the present Nazi leaders may not end Nazism.

Christ rose triumphant. Will Christianity? Who knows? One thing is certain. The Church of Christ has gone down into the Valley of Gethsemane. The Via Dolorosa and Cavalry lie ahead. It shall be more than "the third day" before the Church will rise again.

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